Press release

Met Office celebrates 150 years of weather charts

20 February 2001

Release number 459

In association with Dawn Cover Productions, the Met Office has produced a first-day cover to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the world's first 'real-time' weather chart. This chart was published on the same day as the actual weather conditions it described. Prior to this, weather charts could only be produced days or even weeks after the event, and so were not useful for weather forecasting.

View first-day cover

This dramatic increase in the speed of weather analysis set the precedent for all future weather forecasts, right up to the present day. The first-day cover depicts four past weather events that have made a significant mark on 20th century history, and coincides with the issue of a set of weather stamps by the Royal Mail on 13 March. A special postmark showing a weather chart has been commissioned for use by the Royal Mail on the day and will be used to cancel the stamps on this cover. A limited re-print of the first weather chart will also be given FREE with each first-day cover purchased.

Of the weather events featured on the cover, there includes a picture of the D-Day Landing of 1944 - the success of which was wholly dependent on an accurate weather forecast by the Met Office. Without this forecast, the outcome of the Second World War may have been very different.

The other weather events depicted include the blizzards of 1947 and the great London smog in 1952, which was directly responsible for the untimely death of thousands of Londoners. The fourth illustration depicts the long, hot dry Summer of 1976. A cloud satellite picture extends across the remainder of the cover.

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First-day cover

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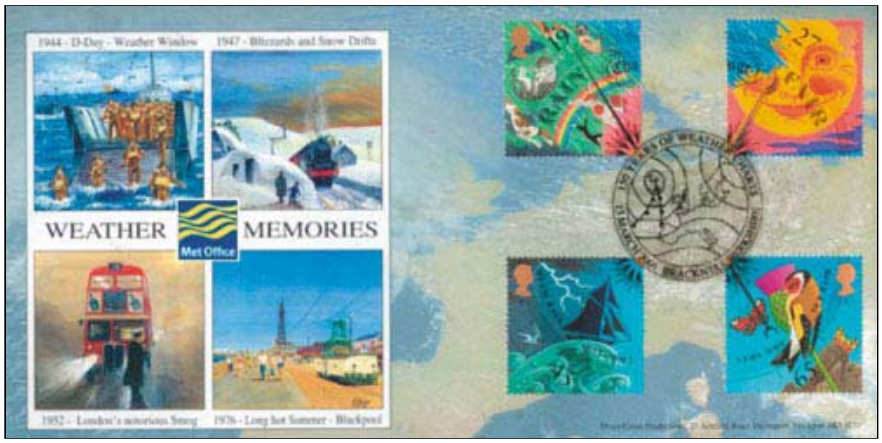

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